

## Ajax East Coast Championships

The Royal Harwich Yacht Club held the Ajax class East Coast Championships on 1st and 2nd of September using Shotley Marina as the base. The first days racing sailed in brilliant sunshine in Dovercourt Bay. With the fleet of nine boats leaving Shotley Marina on low water and a beat out of the narrow channel to the River Stour some boats needed a tow either to avoid or free themselves from the mud. Telamon even managed to run aground leaving the harbour trying to dodge the early flood tide. James Skellorn the race officer set an excellent windward leeward course and a well-judged start line for the F2 southerly wind. In the first race Polly Oliver tacked off early and found more wind inshore, but Orwell VI managed to catch them on the approach to the first mark and lead down the run followed by Thunderer and Polly Oliver. Thunderer pulled through on the second beat and Mars also caught up when Polly Oliver and Orwell VI over-stood the windward mark. Thunderer held on to win, with Orwell VI managing to hold off Mars on the run for second and Polly Oliver fourth.

The second race started promptly with more of flood tide, catching Telamon OCS at the start. Polly Oliver managed again to find some wind and a lift to reach the first mark first closely followed by Orwell VI. These two battled closely on the run but Polly Oliver just managed to gain an overlap to lead around the leeward mark. They held on to the lead on the next beat and gybed away early on the last run to end up as comfortable winners. Orwell VI showed her consistency to again finish second with Guillemot third and Thunderer fourth.

The wind seemed to ease a little for the start of the third race with Mars and Dionysius pushed OCS by the slackening tide. Polly Oliver again established an early lead but a strategic decision by Prometheus to stand further out to sea was rewarded by the wind shifting in their favour and they led round the first mark. Polly Oliver and Thunderer pushed Prometheus hard on the run but they were able to round the leeward mark clear ahead. They then parked! (Later they blamed a jib sheet round the spinnaker pole) This allowed most of the fleet to overtake them.

Polly Oliver and Thunderer traded places on the beat with Polly Oliver coming out ahead and holding on down the final run for the win. Behind these two Guillemot stayed ahead of Orwell VI to come third.

At the end of the day the top three boats (Polly Oliver, Thunderer and Orwell VI) are each separated by one point, with Mars and Guillemot close behind.

Day 2 of the East Coast Championships again had blue skies and sunshine. Sadly less wind than the first days sailing but enough for the Race Officer James Skellorn to get in the final two races. In race 4 Orwell VI started well and led a small group out to sea with rivals Polly Oliver and Thunderer both forced to tack away early to clear their wind. Orwell VI led round the first mark followed by Mars and Prometheus and then Thunderer. Thunderer pulled through to second on the run but Orwell VI stayed clear to win with Thunderer second. Behind them Polly Oliver managed to pass Mars on the approach to the finish. With the discard coming in this left the three leading boats all on 5 points and with the same discard, meaning that the overall result was down to the last race.

For this race an Olympic course was set and the race started in the gentlest of breezes. Thunderer led round the first mark followed by Mars, Guillemot, Polly Oliver and Orwell VI. Both Polly Oliver and Orwell VI passed Mars on the first reach. On the second beat the little wind there had been became less and at one point Thunderer looked vulnerable with Orwell VI coming in to the windward mark from the left and Polly Oliver the right. They managed to hang on to the lead

for the final run. Polly Oliver went inshore on the run, whilst Orwell VI staying out to sea and Thunderer choosing a middle route. With the wind still dropping Thunderer led round the last mark followed by Polly Oliver and then Orwell VI.

The drama was not yet over as the latter two boats were lifted after rounding the mark with Orwell VI gaining more. Thunderer tacked on to starboard and Polly Oliver chose to duck whilst Orwell VI was able to cross and then tack on to starboard. With the wind almost non-existent it was still anybody's race and championships as the three boats battled the tide to cross the finish line. Orwell VI tacked on to port hoping to cross first but the tide pushed them down the line rather than across, and this allowed Thunderer to inch across at the pin end with Polly Oliver becalmed nearer the committee boat. Orwell VI managed to cross next with Guillemot edging across ahead of Polly Oliver.

This left John Williams, Hugh Williams and James Williams the 2018 East Coast Champions and they were presented with the Geoffrey Wrinch Challenge trophy by his son Steve who had sailed the weekend on Dionysius. Orwell VI, sailed by Richard Merriweather, Mark Ingram and Nigel King in his first season as an Ajax owner had good boat speed downwind and well deserved their runners up position. Polly Oliver, sailed by Mike Clayton, Bob Portway and John Gill rounded off the podium.

Full Results:

1st Thunderer 6pts

2nd Orwell VI 7pts

3rd Polly Oliver 9pts

4th Guillemot 14pts

5th Mars 17pts

6th Telamon 24pts

7th Prometheus 27pts

8th Teal 31pts

9th Dionysius 37pts

### [Ajax Autumn Series 9 & 10](#)

Oliver Cromwell once advised his troops to "trust in God and keep your powder dry". On Sunday 23 September the Ajax fleet decided by some form of osmosis that the forecast of heavy rain and potentially strong winds meant that boat covers should remain in place and the Ajax fleet and crews should remain dry whilst younger dinghy sailors did race.

As a result the two races planned for the day were abandoned, and they will not be re-sailed.

## Ajax Autumn Series Races 7 & 8

Six boats and their crews negotiated the road closures to make the start for races 7 & 8 in the Autumn series. With the wind directly across the river and the dinghies having a short sharp series between Park Farm Beacon and Prof the Ajax fleet were kept up river of the club with beats between Priory Beacon/1st Red Can and Middle/Cat House. After a short postponement to allow for sufficient water at Priory Beacon the first race started with a committee boat (Lion 4 Rib) start at Priory Beacon. Prometheus were clearly eager and crossed about ten seconds early but were able to gybe round and start without losing too much. Teal and Telamon had the best of the first beat with most of the fleet holding starboard for a long time, despite the shifty winds from the southerly bank. The course had two shortish reaches, putting pressure on crews to manage either windward hoists or drops of their spinnakers in the gusting F3 to 4 winds. After the first lap Teal led, closely followed by Telamon, Guillemot and Dionysius. By the finish, after a final beat to the First Red can after two full laps Telamon had passed Teal with Guillemot safely third.

The second race was started without delay with the same course and finish. Guillemot showed the fleet that they had not forgotten how to manage the shifty winds to eke out a good lead by the first mark that they extended to the finish. Behind them places did change with Telamon last at the end of the first lap, but pulling through to second on the beat from Priory Beacon to 1st Red Can. Dionysius was the main loser going from 3rd to 5th. By now the short legs and alternate spinnaker gybes was telling and Puffin, who chose not to use their spinnaker pulled through on the final lap to third. Dionysius's problems were compounded at the finish when a header meant they could not lay the mark allowing Prometheus to steal 5th place.

Results: Telamon 1,2; Guillemot 3,1; Teal 2,4; Puffin 6,3; Prometheus 4,5; Dionysius 5,6

## Autumn Series Race 5 & 6 on Sept 10th

The forecast was 15 knots from the SW. This always causes a problem to find a true beat on the Orwell.

The course was, Priory Beacon, Deer Park, Prof, Berners, two rounds.

The reaching start was won by Thunderer who reached Priory first with a twenty yard lead while the rest of the fleet went very high defending their wind.

Dionysius was second closely followed by Guillemot. The beat was full of large wind shifts and "holes". Guillemot read the shifts perfectly and arrived at Deer Park first with Thunderer and Dionysius close behind and Telamon and Prometheus also in contention.

Guillemot held her lead throughout the next lap with Thunderer occasionally getting closer during the various lulls and gusts.

At the finish, it was Guillemot, Thunderer and Prometheus.

For the second race, the course was left unchanged. History repeated itself with Thunderer leading off the line on the reach and arriving at Priory with a twenty yard lead from the rest of the fleet who again all went high. Again Guillemot played the shifts brilliantly on the beat and arrived at Deer Park first. She elected not to hoist her spinnaker until Thunderer hoisted hers and started catching. However, Thunderer to leeward could not break through the wind shadow and had to settle for second place at Prof.

Again Guillemot played the shifts well on the second beat and increased her lead at Berners. Thunderer and Dionysius remained in second and third places for the rest of the race and finished in that order.

Results

Race 1:- Guillemot, Thunderer, Prometheus, Dionysius, Telamon, Puffin

Race 2:- Guillemot, Thunderer, Dionysius, Telamon, Prometheus, Puffin

## Autumn Series Race 3 & 4 on August 26th

The forecast was for heavy rain and strong winds spreading from the west.

Only 5 boats turned out. The wind was from the SSW and course setting and trying to get a true beat is extremely challenging from that direction. The course for the first race was, Line A, Priory beacon, Deer Park, line, PFB, Berners, line x 2 with an instruction to shorten at 45 mins because of the ominous forecast.

The Tide was flooding and it was a reaching start with the wind on the beam.

Guillemot and Thunderer arrived at the line slightly too early and both luffed to slow down. Unfortunately Guillemot went past head to wind and tacked unintentionally putting her out of the running. Thunderer was head to wind very near the line and nearly stopped. However she got off the line first reaching into a comfortable lead. Orwell VI had started further to windward in order to be able to hoist a spinnaker, but this didn't pay and Thunderer rounded Priory beacon first. The wind on the beat was extremely variable in strength and direction. This made for a lot of difficult decisions. "Tack or not". Guillemot was caught on the wrong side of a big shift and fell from second to third with Orwell VI getting into second. Positions remained unchanged and Thunderer held on to win with Orwell VI second and Guillemot third.

For the second race, the course was changed slightly so that the first beat was from Priory beacon to No7. The wind strength had risen considerably and the sky had become dark and threatening. Again, Thunderer started from the Leeward end of the line and got into a comfortable lead with Spinnakers up at Priory. Orwell VI was again in second. The wind was again extremely shifty and Guillemot, Orwell VI and Puffin were all in close contention on the beat. The order at No7 was Thunderer, Orwell VI, and Guillemot.

On the next beat from PFB to Berners, the wind picked up to force 4. The leading Ajaxes had caught up with the dinghy handicap class, which meant some dipping and tacking for other boats. Thunderer was put about by a cruiser which was sailing through the course but not much time was lost. Thunderer again led at Berners by about thirty yards and hoisted the spinnaker. Orwell VI who was still in second got a huge gust which she held for 200 yards catching Thunderer to be level and to leeward.

However, Thunderer had the inside position at the mark and rounded first. Again, the beat was extremely shifty and Orwell VI looked to be ahead of Thunderer. However as they were converging with Thunderer on Starboard, they both got a huge shift from the right which meant that Orwell VI had to tack and Thunderer was able to sail over her. Thunderer continued to get her lucky lift right up to the No7 buoy, but unfortunately the lift didn't hold for Orwell VI and she had to tack, giving Thunderer a 30 yard lead again. Thunderer held this to the line, where the race officer shortened the course as the rain was falling and the wind increasing. Orwell VI was second with Guillemot third and Sirius in fourth, crewed by a previous Ajax owner from 20 years ago!

### Results

Race 1: Thunderer, Orwell VI, Guillemot, Sirius, Puffin.

Race 2: Thunderer, Orwell VI, Guillemot, Sirius, Puffin.

John Williams

## Autumn Series Race1 & 2 August 19th

Only Four boats came to the line at Clamphouse in what turned out to be two very enjoyable races, without having to wait for the Sea Breeze to fill in. However this meant that it was almost impossible to set a course with a decent beat in it in the south-westerly wind.

The course for the first race was, Clamphouse start upriver to No 4 (P), Collimer(S), No1(S), Finish at Trimley. Orwell VI started at the windward end of the line so as to pass a moored Barge to windward, Guillemot started further down the line went to leeward of the barge and on reaching No4 was surprised to see Orwell VI had fallen into one of many holes to arrive second behind her.

There was then a close reach down to collimer with Orwell VI 's good spinnaker work passing Guillemot to windward, Dionysius and Puffin were having their own race just behind the first two. There was then a close reach down to No1, Orwell VI attempted to do an unsuccessful windward spinnaker hoist and almost let Guillemot through to windward, but not quite! So they fished very close with Orwell VI winning from Guillemot, with Dionysius third followed by Puffin.

The second race started Between the Committee boat and No2 Buoy, then Stratton (P), No 4(P), No3 (P), Finishing between No4 and Bay.

At the start Orwell VI attempted to make a committee boat end start but arrived too early and had to return and start again, this enabled Guillemot to get clear ahead followed by Dionysius and Puffin. During the next two legs Orwell VI managed to slip through to second but could not catch Guillemot. Puffin had a few interesting moments with her spinnaker and finished a respectful fourth.

Orwell VI 1, 2. Guillemot 2,1. Dionysius 3,3. Puffin 4,4.

## Ajax Regatta 11th-12th Aug 2018

8 boats entered the regatta. The fleet was greeted with light and variable winds from the West on the Saturday.

The course was from Line A, Deer Park , Line, No5 (P), Bay, Line x2.

Orwell VI made the early running but Thunderer delayed her gybe to the Northern shore, and got a nice puff of wind and so had a good lead while passing in front of the club. Carrying shy spinnakers the fleet crossed the river at No 6 where Thunderer fell into a hole while the rest of the fleet sailed away. The wind was light and fluky all the way down to Bay (due to the sea breeze trying to overcome the prevailing westerly) and there was significant place changing. Telamon rounded first with Guillemot second and Orwell third. By the time the fleet reached the line (where the race was mercifully shortened) Guillemot led with Orwell VI in second and Telamon third.

For the second race the course was the same, (as the sea breeze never became established). Thunderer got round Deer Park first and hoisted the spinnaker and had a good lead from Teal in second. Thunderer was again becalmed on passing No 6 and Teal drifted past. Guillemot was in third. Positions remained the same down to Bay and back up the river until Orwell VI closed up behind Guillemot and as the wind swung behind, hoisted her spinnaker and overtook. So at the line it was Teal, Thunderer, Orwell VI and Guillemot.

Sunday brought a slightly stronger and gustier wind from the South and SSW.

This is a problem for course setting as there is no obvious beat.

The course was Committee boat start, Prof, Grog, line, Priory beacon, Deer Park, Priory buoy, Deer Park line.

Orwell VI made the best start with the fleet bunched up behind. Thunderer was slightly to Leeward in dirty air. Guillemot was close second. The fleet spread out on the run down to Priory beacon and were almost able to lay Deer park from there. Unfortunately the wind was extremely shifty around Deer Park and several boats including Thunderer made several tacks within 20 yards of the buoy trying to get round. Orwell VI held a good lead all the way round and was never really troubled. Guillemot held second all the way round and Teal was third.

For the second race of the day, the course was altered to, Line A, Prof, Grog, line, Priory beacon, No 7, Line. X2

Thunderer led off the start line down to the Leeward end of the line. Guillemot was lying second and Telamon third. Thunderer had a good lead at Grog and hoisted the spinnaker more rapidly than had been the case in previous races!

The following boats were unfortunately blanketed by a large cruising boat which allowed Thunderer to move into a very large lead. At the finish, Telamon was second with Guillemot third. This meant that Guillemot and Orwell VI both had a 1,2,3 which, on countback, meant that Guillemot won the Anita Cup (yet again!) having beaten Orwell VI in the last race.

Results overall:

1st Guillemot  
2nd Orwell VI  
3rd Teal  
4th Thunderer  
5th Telamon

### Summer Series Races 13 & 14. 5th August 2018

The racing was due to start at the Clamp and 7 boats left the marina for a slow beat down to the start in a very light South easterly breeze. The start was postponed for about 10 minutes to allow the stragglers to get there and also to allow the potential sea breeze to kick in over the prevailing wind.

The course was to No 3 to port and back to the start line.

At 3 minutes to the start, the wind died and boats hardly had steerage way which led to a rather chaotic start. Just after the start signal, the wind filled in from the right and Orwell VI led from Pegasus and a gaggle of others. The tide at this point was fairly neutral but there were some big shifts in the rather unstable wind.

Orwell VI maintained her lead but Thunderer who had pulled through to second, got a good shift and approached No3 on Starboard. Orwell VI was just able to tack onto Starboard at the buoy in front of Thunderer. These two rounded while overlapped with Thunderer outside.

Spinnakers were hoisted and both set off to run to the finish at clamp. Guillemot had pulled through to third at this point after a poor start.

Thunderer decided to attack Orwell VI to windward which meant that both boats headed to the windward shore.

At this point Thunderer gave up as she could see Guillemot steaming along to leeward, but in bearing away, she ran into a hole with no wind at all and it looked as though Orwell VI was going to win easily. However the wind filled in a little stronger on the North shore (to leeward) and Thunderer came through to win with Orwell VI second and Guillemot a very close third.

The wind had picked up a little to about 10 knots for the second race and the tide had started flooding. The course was to No 3 again, run back to Bay, beat back to No 3 and run back to a line between No 6 and Park Bight.

Thunderer ran down the line to the unfavoured end in order to get out of the tide first. This tactic did not look good at first as the boats that started at the right end of the line were lifted in a good breeze. Orwell VI had a good lead initially but the wind was very shifty and there were good chances for the following boats to catch up. At this point Thunderer was second and Guillemot close by in third. About 2/3 of the way up the beat, Thunderer tacked into the north shore on Starboard and was lucky enough to get a lift on Starboard in very shallow water while Orwell VI

and Guillemot were heading out into the stream on Port. This was crucial and Thunderer was able to tack out from the shore for No 3 with a good lead over Orwell VI and Guillemot. Meanwhile Prometheus was exploring the mud near Levington (twice). Positions were unchanged on the run. On the second beat, Guillemot was able to overtake Orwell VI to claim second, and Teal closed up as well.

Positions were maintained all the way back to the finish, although Orwell VI pulled up very close to Guillemot, who held on for second by half a boats length. Teal was a little way behind in fourth.

Results.

Race 1: Thunderer, Orwell VI, Guillemot, Teal, Dionysius, Prometheus, Pegasus

Race 2: Thunderer, Guillemot, Orwell VI, Teal, Dionysius, Pegasus, Prometheus RTD.

John Williams

### Summer Series Race 11. 29th July 2018

Only two boats were on the start line ,Dionysius and OrwellVI. The course was lineA, Prof , Grog, 7, lineA in a gusty SE wind force 4 to 6.

Dionysius just got the drop on Orwell VI at the start and covered her on the close fetch to Prof and continued to match her tack for tack to Grog,rounding the mark in front. Orwell VI caught up on the spinnaker run and overtook as Dionysius dropped her spinnaker after no6. Dionysius retook the lead as Orwell dropped hers and rounded no7 . It was neck and neck on the fetch to Prof until disaster struck Orwell VI. They were only 2 Up and the jib halyard came unhitched. The crew hiking out holding the sheet for support suddenly found he had a couple of meters more than he needed and fell overboard. Richard Merryweather managed to drop his sails and Dionysius turned back and called the rescue boat to assist. Orwell VI was then assisted back to the marina and Dionysius finished the lap to claim a hollow victory. One on one racing in well matched boats is certainly a very enjoyable format.

Phil Mayhew

### Summer Series Races 9 & 10, 22nd July 2018

The Summer Series continued on Sunday 22 July after a week's break where many of the Ajax Fleet supported the club's major dinghy event, the Smugglers Weekend. The summer weather continued with a gentle W/NW F2 blowing the fleet down to the Clamp House start. Conditions further downriver were more confused with a sea breeze established at Shotley by 12:30. The fleet therefore had a running start for the first race with a course of Collimer (S), No 1(P) and a finish at Trimley. Polly Oliver and Thunderer both started well with Orwell VI close behind. Guillemot started rather later but chose a more leeward course. The key to the race was going to be the transition from the westerly at the start to the SSE sea breeze. This occurred around Levington with the fleet concatenating. Polly Oliver and Thunderer converged with virtually no steerage way and in avoiding Thunderer Polly Oliver was not able to also avoid a moored boat and she retired. Guillemot found the new wind first with Thunderer and Orwell VI also well place for the beat to No 1. In the early stages of the sea breeze finding wind was key and gaps opened up between those in wind and those not, leaving Telamon stuck firmly at the back of the fleet.

Thunderer found more wind on the left of the beat to lead at No 1 followed by Orwell VI and Guillemot. This was the finishing order after the run back up river.

The course for the second race was a start at No 2 with No 1(P), Collimer (P) and a finish between Bay and No 4. Thunderer and Prometheus were early, with Thunderer able to gybe round No 2 without large deficit. Prometheus found herself to wind ward of Orwell VI and lost more significant ground. On the first beat Orwell VI went left across the flooding tide and Polly Oliver went right. In the early stages of the beat this gave the advantage to Orwell VI and Pegasus also was well up following a similar route. Polly Oliver managed to claw back some ground in the later stages of the beat and a well judged tack for the mark by Orwell VI meant the two boats rounded No 1 together with Polly Oliver on the outside. A slick spinnaker hoist by Orwell VI gave them a small advantage on the run to Collimer and despite pressure from Polly Oliver they held on for a well deserved win. The duelling ahead allowed Thunderer free reign for their course after Collimer and they finished a close third.

### Summer Series Races 7 & 8, 8th July 2018

After the club celebrations of the night before the Race Officer was grateful that the racing had a 12:30 start time. Getting the start right was the key to success on the day. In the first race the course was an optimistic beat to Trimley from the Clamp House start with a return leg to Bay and a second beat to Trimley and a final run to No 3. The starting options were to go for more wind and tide in the middle of the river, with some help from the line's bias or to start at the favoured windward end. Thunderer got an excellent start in the middle whilst the rest of the fleet fought for the windward end with Guillemot coming out on top. The F3 South Easterly wind favoured the windward end and when Thunderer tacked across on port Guillemot passed ahead. These positions remained unchanged until the finish with the course shortened at the second rounding of Trimley after 70 minutes of racing. Behind the front two the closest racing was between Telamon and Puffin for 5th place, with little separating the two boats on the run and reach back to Bay. Between these two and the leading boats Teal and Sirius kept a respectful distance apart.

For the second race, with the wind mainly from the SSE, with some 30 degree shifts the start again proved to be key. The course was a beat from No 2 to No 1, followed by a run to Collimer and a reach to the finish at Bay. The start line was port biased and the wind dropped in the last minute leaving only Thunderer on the line and moving. Teal just managed to keep clear of No 2 whilst the remaining boats were well back and almost becalmed at the Committee Boat end of the line. Keeping moving and taking advantage of the significant shifts was the key to success with Thunderer remaining ahead to the finish followed by Guillemot.

Results. Thunderer 2,1; Guillemot 1,2; Teal 3,3; Sirius 4,5; Puffin 6,4; Telamon 5,6; Pegasus 7,7

### Summer Series Races 5& 6, 1st July 2018

The day was cloud free, with an Easterly breeze as gradient wind, forecast to build to F4. Great sailing weather!

Race 1: 9 Boats raced, tight battles at front between PollyOliver, Thunderer and Teal became less tight after PollyOliver lassoed a guard rail on a moored boat with the spinnaker sheet, and promptly retired, no damage done. Thunderer held a narrow lead over Teal to the finish, while third place went to Guillemot after Orwell V1 failed to drop her spinnaker at the last mark.

Race 2: Same 9 boats, different result as PollyOliver failed to progress from a bad start, Thunderer and Guillemot went aground, Teal had to do turns, leaving Orwell V1 (was Widgeon) to inherit the lead. Guillemot challenged down wind, but Orwell V1 (Richard Merriweather) hung on for a well deserved win.

## Results

Thunderer (14) 1,3. OrwellV1 (57) 4,1 Guillemot (20) 3,2 Teal (26) 2,4.

Telamon (61 ) 5,6. Puffin (23) 6,7, Sirius (34) 7,8 PollyOliver (17) R,5. Pegasus (29) 8,9

## Summer Series Races 3 & 4 - 24th June 2018

Racing for the Summer series resumed on 25 June, after the gap the previous week for the 175 Pursuit Race. The class did not manage to feature in the top places, despite a very good and close race between Orwell VI and Thunderer with the former the leading Ajax at the finish.

For race 3 in the summer series the course was Berners (P); Prof (P); No 7 (S); Priory Beacon (S). The wind was very light with the forecast North-easterly replaced at times by breeze from the North-West and a myriad other directions. The fleet started well with three boats (Polly Oliver, Orwell VI and Teal) flying spinnakers from higher up the line, and Thunderer and Dionysius lower looking for the first of the ebb tide. Honours were evenly divided with Polly Oliver managing to sail over the two non-spinnaker boats with Dionysius second at Berners followed by Orwell VI and Thunderer. The planned beat to Prof became a fetch with a temporary North Westerly wind boats were almost close hauled for the leg back through the line. At this point the wind died and there were some big winners and losers as those that strayed out into the stronger tide found progress very slow. Polly Oliver stayed high to lead through the line with Guillemot also managing to find some elusive wind. These two boats had a large lead over the fleet for the beat from No 7 to Priory Beacon with Polly Oliver holding on for the win. Behind these Teal came in third with Bob Tate back in the boat after a few weeks absence and Dionysius fourth.

With the wind still fickle an optimistic class captain set a course to Priory Beacon (P); Downham (S); Priory (P); Cathouse(P); Downham (P) and a finish on line A. For th start the wind died with Telamon over the line, but going backwards on the tide to start correctly. Four boats converged on the Outer distance some 10 minutes after the start with some confusion about the rules. Polly Oliver emerged from this ahead, followed by Guillemot and Thunderer who had done a a penalty turn. Guillemot passed Polly Oliver and led at Priory Beacon. With a number of boats retiring it was agreed to shorten the course to round Downham to port and sail to the line. At Downham the three leading boats were abreast with Polly Oliver on the inside and Thunderer in the outside. The inside boats dropped spinnaker, whilst Thunderer gybed and headed in the faster flowing tide where they became becalmed. Polly Oliver and Guillemot headed high in a light breeze and could see the advancing sea breeze. This reached them around No 7 and the two boats split tacks for the short beat back to the line. At the line Guillemot won by about a metre finishing at the ODM with Polly Oliver at the marina end of the line. After Thunderer, Teal was the only other boat to persevere and claim 4th.

Results. Guillemot 2,1; Polly Oliver 1,2; Teal 3,4; Thunderer 5,3; Dionysius 4,RTD; Orwell VI 6,DNC; Prometheus 7,RTD; Telamon 8,RTD; Pegasus 9,RTD; Mars DNC;RTD

## Summer Series Races 1 & 2 - 9-10th June 2018

Sunday 10th of June was not looking promising for racing with very little wind from the North blowing as 8 boats left the club for a down river start at Clamp House. The forecast wind was North Easterly and locally winds ranging from the North East to the South East were being reported <http://hha.co.uk/live-data/wind-speed/>

The start of the first race at Clamp House was in an almost flat clam but the forecast wind soon started to fill in and Puffin sailed away into an early lead. Behind her a number of boats attempted to fly spinnakers, these were soon lowered as it became clear that the wind was heading and laying Collimer was not straight forward. Dionysius and Thunderer followed Puffin along the southern shore, whilst Polly Oliver tacked off on one header to aim for more tide and subsequently a freeing wind. Spinnakers were hoisted at Collimer with Puffin maintaining their lead followed by Polly Oliver, Dionysius and Thunderer in close succession. As the wind went East it became clear that spinnakers could not be carried to Orwell and a delayed drop by Puffin cost her several places allowing Polly Oliver through into the lead, followed by Dionysius and Thunderer. The "planned" beat from Orwell to Trimley became a fetch with a final reach back to the finish at Orwell. The top three places were unchanged, with Puffin suffering further by having to give room rounding Orwell.

With the wind now clearly established from the North East there was no possibility of a beat in the Orwell so the course for Race 2 was set as No 1 (S), Shotley Horse (S), Bristol (P), Shotley Horse (P), Collimer (P) with a self finish between Bay and No 4.

The start line favoured a pin end start on Starboard from where No 1 could be laid. This meant that 8 Ajax's were vying to be in the best position. Polly Oliver succeeded and managed to avoid being OCS followed by Sirius, with Thunderer opting for speed underneath them. Behind these three it was very close with boats not having room to tack if there was another boat behind them. Polly Oliver extended away on the run from Shotley Horse to Bristol whilst Thunderer consolidated in second with Sirius suffering from the lack of a third crew member. On the beat back from Bristol we had the best wind of the day, although there were some big shifts influenced in part by a large departing container ship. Puffin and Pegasus gained places by heading to the Marina shore, whilst those who stayed further out were headed. Teal pulled up well on the run and gained third place. After Shotley Horse there was little opportunity to overtake although Thunderer did stage a late charge to close up on first place.

Results. Polly Oliver 1,1; Thunderer 3,2; Dionysius 2,5; Teal 4,3; Puffin 6,4; Sirius 5,8; Pegasus 8,6; Telamon 7,7

## Prosser Plate

Eight of the Ajax fleet came out to contest the Prosser Plate with a short series of races on Saturday 2nd June. They included the re-fitted Orwell VI (formerly Widgeon) with final preparations being undertaken until shortly before racing commenced. Despite the forecast of rain and even lightning the weather remained bright and sunny throughout with winds of Force 2 to 3.

Charles Twiss, supported by Bob Tate and Jon Stokes managed to complete five races before the turning tide (and exhaustion for the crews) stopped proceeding. The courses consisted of three windward/leeward courses and two triangle/sausage courses. There were 2 wins each for Thunderer and Polly Oliver and one win for Guillemot. The results allowed for one discard once

four races were sailed resulting in these three boats finishing within one point of each other. The overall positions were virtually determined by the first race where Polly Oliver led around the windward mark of a one lap windward leeward course. On the run first Guillemot and the Thunderer gybed inshore and despite sailing extra distance both managed to come out ahead of Polly Oliver at the leeward mark with Guillemot holding on for the win. After this two firsts for Thunderer who generally managed good starts at the pin end, and who recovered well from being over the line in race 3 to finish third, gave them a score of 7 points, whilst Guillemot managed three second places to have the same score and lose out on count back. Polly Oliver added another third and two firsts to finish one point behind.

Behind these three racing was close throughout the fleet on the short courses. Teal came fourth and was second in race 4 whilst Orwell VI and Prometheus finished level on points with the latter's third place finish in the final race enough to give them fifth place on count back.

### Race 11 and 12 - 27th May 2018

The concluding part of the spring series saw Summer take over with Warm and a gusty F3-4 ENE to hurry us along. A course of Line A, Prof P, 7P Line A x 2 looked to give a fair Beat/Run and was used for both races, with 7 boats on the line.

A promising start by Giles in Teal saw him round Prof alongside PollyOliver(Bob Portway) after a close tussle up the beat, but then pull out a good lead after PollyOlivers spinnaker failed to fly. On the beat to Line A, PollyOliver sailed more out of the tide to lead for the rest of the race. Gillemot (David Mayne) was back to sailing fast and had moved up to 2nd by Prof. The order stayed like this to the finish.

In the second race, Teal again made a good start to lead in the early stages, but was caught by Guillemot before Prof. Approaching Prof with the fleet very tight and the wind very shifty, PollyOliver infringed Thunderer (John Williams) and took a penalty turn. The fleet remained very bunched on the subsequent run and beat, with Guillemot just leading Thunderer and Dionysius(Phil Mayhew). In the tightest of finishes, Guillemot held her lead from Thunderer, while PollyOliver sneaked ahead of Dionysius and Teal, with these 4 boats crossing in a space of 3 seconds.

PollyOliver has been the on-form boat this series, winning races with both Mike and Bob at the helm. Guillemot found form in the later stages, while Teal has been very consistent towards the front of the fleet throughout. Good to see you there Giles.

Results: Guillemot (20) 2,1 PollyOliver (17) 1,3. Thunderer (14) 5,3. Teal (26) 3,5. Dionysius (71) 4,4 Telamon (61 ) 6,6. Sirius (34) 7,7

### Race 9 and 10 - 20th May 2018

After the results confusion from Race 8 (resolved by email during the week) the Ajax fleet had to contend with self-starting from the club line for races 9 and 10. For Race 9 the timings were taken from the starting sequence for the dinghy's scatter race and with 10 boats out there was some bunching on the favoured end of the line. The course was a beat to Grog (P), a run to Downham (P), a second beat to Grog (P) and a run to the finish. The wind was a light F2 from

the South-East. Four boats (Mars, Teal, Dionysius and Polly Oliver) went right with the rest of the fleet going left. Initially there was more wind to the right but that side did not pay with the four boats at the back of the fleet by the time Grog was reached. On the left the race quickly developed into a match race between Thunderer and Guillemot chased hard by Pegasus, Sirius, Telamon and Prometheus. Thunderer and Huillemot pulled away on the run and continued their battle until the finish line, never more than a couple of boat lengths apart. Thunderer managed to lead round all the marks and stay ahead for victory. Behind these two the fleet compressed at Downham with a short period of little wind. Sirius and Telamon had an incident rounding Downham with both doing a 360 turn to exonerate themselves. This allowed Mars, Teal and Polly Oliver through for the long beat back to Grog. This section of the fleet remained close at Grog with Mars and Polly Oliver improving their positions. On the run to the finish Mars pulled through to third, with Pegasus 4th and Polly Oliver 5th.

Race 10 was self-started with signal over the radio from Thunderer. The course was a single lap of Grog to Downham and finish. With the experience of the previous race everyone went left with some boats choosing to start at the favoured end of the line and cross the tide. This strategy paid and Mars and Teal led the fleet towards Grog. Guillemot emerged ahead of those starting out of the tide and managed to reach Grog ahead of Teal. Most of the leading boats gybed onto port before setting spinnakers. On the run Mars had a problem with their spinnaker pole allowing Guillemot to reach Downham ahead, and with Mars not being able to remove the pole quickly Teal was able to tack inside to move up to 2nd. Behind these three Polly Oliver gained on the run by staying out in the tide and moved up to 4th with Thunderer 5th. These positions were held on the beat to the finish in what was perhaps the best breeze of the day.

Next Sunday has the final two races in the series, Polly Oliver looks to have won the series, but the race for 2nd and 3rd is still wide open.

Results Guillemot 2,1; Mars 3,3; Thunderer 1,5; Teal 6,2; Polly Oliver 5,4; Telamon 8,6; Prometheus 7,7; Pegasus 4,10; Dionysius 10,8; Sirius 9,9

### Race 7 and 8 - 13th May 2018

A forecast of 10 knots NW for these two races must have encouraged the fleet as 9 Ajax's came out to play for race 7, and 10 for race 8. Although the tide was high, we were limited by a Topper event using the area of Priory Beacon and Middle, therefore it was agreed that we would stay in the channel by leaving 7 to Starboard on the way to Downham (port turning mark) and 1st Red Can to port on way back to the line. Park Bight port turning mark and through line A each way seemed a logical way of achieving this.

The 1st beat was typically chaotic with difficulty finding a way through on Port. In the midst of chaos, some boats left 7 to port, including early leader Giles in Teal, and the Williams in Thunderer. Giles was shouted at, but John must have been out of range, as he tacked onto starboard to cover the fleet towards 1st Red Can, but left 7 to Port, observed by both Telamon (Gordon) and Dionysius (Phil and Simon). Thunderer continued to sail very steadily, making no further mistakes and benefitting from clear wind ahead of the fleet, once early leader Pollyoliver (Bob Portway) was passed. Pollyoliver was left fighting for air among Teal, Dionysius, Telamon and Guillemot, managing to hold on to 2nd, but promoted to 1st on the retirement of Thunderer. Guillemot sailed the shifts expertly as always to taker 2nd ahead of Telamon and Teal.

The 2nd race was the same course, but having started after the top of the tide, was slowed by the strength of the ebb, and an unexpected fading of the wind. Thunderer and Pollyoliver got away best, but Prometheus (Tim Archer) found the GO button and was in contention around Park

Bight. In the drag race to the shore, Pollyoliver footed off under Prometheus and Thunderer, found some heading wind and tacked for the line. Another header later and some more tacking on shifts brought Mars and Dionysius into contention. Pollyoliver and Thunderer kept out of the tide to grab 1st and 2nd ahead of Mars (Chris Brown) and Dionysius.

#### Results

PollyOliver (17) 1,1. Thunderer (14) rtd,4

Mars (41)dns3 Guillemot (20) 2,rtd

Teal (26) 4,9. Puffin (23) 8,5

Telamon (61 ) 3,6 Prometheus (62) 7,7

Dionysius (71) 5,2. Pegasus (29) 6,10

Sirius (34) DNS, 8

### Race 5 and 6 - 6th May 2018

Sunday 6th May was a perfect day for sailing with a light F2 blowing straight up the river giving a good beat for a course set between Grog (P) and Downham (P). The first race was one lap only. Six boats started with Polly Oliver having an individual recall for an early start. As is often the case opinion was divided as to whether to keep to the southern or northern shore to avoid the tide. Guillemot led Pegasus on the southern shore, with Teal leading Telamon and Puffin on the north. Polly Oliver recovered quickly from her re-start to join the northern shore boats and managed to slip ahead of Teal on the approach to Grog. The Northern shore boats led around Grog and Polly Oliver and Teal had a close race to Downham, with Polly Oliver just managing to keep clear ahead as they approached the turning mark. On the beat back to the line Guillemot chased hard but Teal hung on for second.

For the second race the course was extended with a second beat to Grog and a finish on the run up-river. Again there were premature starters with Teal and Puffin being subject to re-call. This time the wind died on the Northern shore and both Polly Oliver and Telamon were caught by Teal who had started on the southern side, crossing after No 6. These three boats had a close race to Grog with Polly Oliver again managing to lead at the mark followed by Teal and Telamon. Teal again closed up on Polly Oliver on the run to Downham but again Polly Oliver managed to escape and break the overlap when the mark was reached. The leading positions remained unchanged on the beat to Grog although all the boats were still close together at the finish.

Results: Polly Oliver 1,1; Teal 2,2; Telamon 4,3; Guillemot 3,4; Puffin 5,5; Pegasus 6,6

### Race 3 and 4 - 29th April 2018

Oliver led the fleet away followed by Prometheus and Dionysius who had arrived too early and needed to return whilst avoiding the "Allen Gardiner" who was parked on the start line. Teal and Pegasus both started late. The course for both races was a fetch to First Red Can (S), a beat to Priory Beacon (S), a reach to Berners (P) and a final beat to Prof (P) with two laps. Positions remained unchanged on the short beat although Dionysius closed up on

Prometheus. Polly Oliver, sailing 2 up hoisted her spinnaker on the reach but quickly lowered it to sort out a major twist. Dionysius used her spinnaker to good effect to overtake Prometheus and close up on Polly Oliver. The beat to Prof was very one sided and didn't allow any overtaking opportunities and the position remained unchanged. On the reach back Prometheus flew her spinnaker, but the reach was too fine and the attempt short lived.

Polly Oliver held her lead for the next lap, successfully flying their spinnaker on the reach from Priory Beacon to Berners to hold off Dionysius. Dionysius also attempted to fly her spinnaker after Prof, but again the attempt was short lived and there were no further place changes.

The second race started without any confusion with Polly Oliver and Dionysius leading the charge to the first mark. Polly Oliver gained the inside berth and held on starboard with Dionysius unable to tack. Teal and Pegasus both tacked early and when the boats had gained and Polly Oliver ducked with Dionysius forced to tack. Polly Oliver also ducked Pegasus allowing Teal and Dionysius to lead round Priory Beacon with Pegasus behind and Polly Oliver level with Prometheus. Teal extended on the reach and led Dionysius round the rest of the course. Behind these two the battle for third was close, initially with Pegasus and Prometheus in contention and finally Polly Oliver using her spin an alter effectively on the second lap to over take Prometheus and secure the theirs place on the podium.

Results (subject to protest). Polly Oliver 1,3; Dionysius 2,2; Teal 5,1; Prometheus 3,4; Pegasus 4,5

### Race 1 and 2 - 23rd April 2018

The Ajax class started their 2018 Spring Series in bright sunshine and a southerly F2 to F3. A real contrast to the colder weather of just a few weeks ago that delayed some boats preparations for the season. Despite this four boats came to the line with Prometheus having to tack round as Polly Oliver claimed the pin end. The course was a fetch to Colimer, a beat to No 1, a run to Trimley, a second beat to Orwell with the finish at Trimley.

Polly Oliver held of Teal on the first leg to round Collimer first, with Dionysius in third. The boats remained close up the beat and rounded No 1 in the same order. On the run to Trimley, Polly Oliver gained and Dionysius passed Teal. The second beat to Orwell saw both leading boats finding the mud, with Dionysius losing enough ground to allow Teal to over take. These positions were held on the final run.

The second race was a beat from Trimley to Orwell, a run to Collimer and a fetch to the finish at Bay. Dionysius claimed the best start and all four boats had a close race for most of the beat. Towards the end of the beat Dionysius found the benefit of of the veering wind to lead around Orwell followed by Polly Oliver, Teal and Prometheus. These position remained until the finish.

Results. Polly Oliver 1,2. Dionysius 3,1. Teal 2,3. Prometheus 4,4